



UNIVERSITY OF  
MARYLAND



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## **Developing CourseEvalUM: Our Process, Challenges, and New Directions**

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## What We'll Cover Today

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- 🍷 History of the project
- 🍷 Decisions made along the way
- 🍷 Instrument development
- 🍷 Reporting
- 🍷 Administration and implementation
- 🍷 Next steps

## Project History

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- 🍷 Decentralized by college and even department
- 🍷 Students interested in seeing results
- 🍷 Senate action – committees, task forces, etc.
- 🍷 Assigned to IRPA to design and administer
- 🍷 Technical development assigned to OIT

## Project History - Timeline

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- April 2005: Task Force submits final recommendations to Campus Senate
- April 2006: Implementation Committee submits plan
- December 2006: Items piloted
- Summer 2007: First level of technology piloted
- December 2007: All courses participate
- May 2008: College level & multiple instructors added

## Decisions

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- 🍷 Senate task forces envisioned dynamic system with hierarchy for university, college, department, and instructor items
- 🍷 Lawyers required administrative vs. student views for personnel file reasons
- 🍷 Comments go to administrators, and instructors see all
- 🍷 Off-the-shelf products did not have such a system available, could develop for \$\$

## Decisions (cont.)

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- OIT heard of an open-source product being designed with these specifics, in Sakai
- Student participation key
  - 70% response rate necessary for course display
  - No access without participation
- Needed a coordinator

## Instrument Development

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- Senate task force suggested 16 universal items
- Piloted the items to see how they function
  - Partnered with units to replace with or add items to existing systems in Fall'06
- Conducted subsequent pilots to test new technology system

## Qualitative Analysis of Pilot Data

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- Respondents asked to comment on items which seemed unclear, were hard to answer, or did not seem to apply to them
- Most feedback was positive but some items were identified as problematic
  - Slight changes made to item wording and response options

## Example of Item Changes

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- Original item: “*The grading in this course was fair.*” (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
- Several issues raised by respondents
  - Hard to answer
  - Non-directional
- Revised item: “*Based on the quality of my work in this course, the grades I earned were...*” (Too Low, Appropriate, Too High)

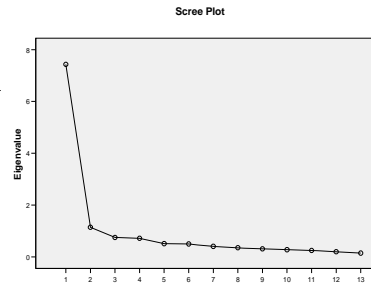
## Quantitative Analyses of Pilot Data

### Descriptive statistics

Respondents tend to use positive end of scale

### Dimensionality

Items tap single dimension



## Quantitative Analyses (cont.)

### Reliability

Responses are highly consistent across the set of items

Student and administrator item sub-sets function the same

Responses remain stable across administrations

## Reporting of Results

### Types of reports currently available

Course-section reports

Summary reports

### Calculation and display of results

Access to results

Summary measures

### Methodological decisions and challenges

## Course-Section Reports

### Display of results depends on item type

Access to results: student, admin, or instructor

Focus of the item: instructor or course item

Response scale: interval, ordinal, or text

Hierarchy level: university or college-level

## Sample Course-Section Report

**ADMINISTRATOR UNIVERSITY-WIDE INSTRUCTOR ITEMS:**  
 Questions for use by faculty/instructors and for administrative purposes  
 N/A responses have been excluded from the following calculations.

	Instructor: Professor A					FAKE100 0101		COLLEGE COMPARISON*	
	Number of Responses	% Strongly Disagree	% Disagree	% Neutral	% Agree	% Strongly Agree	Mean	Stdv.	Mean
The instructor treated students with respect.	65	0	2	2	25	72	3.68	0.589	3.49
The instructor was well-prepared for class.	65	0	0	2	17	82	3.80	0.440	3.40
Overall, this instructor was an effective teacher.	65	0	0	5	15	80	3.75	0.531	3.04




\* Average rating for all similarly leveled course sections (e.g., all 200-level course sections) in this college.

**AVERAGE OF FIVE ADMINISTRATOR AGREE/DISAGREE QUESTIONS: 3.58 / 4.00**  
 Scaled 0-4: Strongly Disagree=0; Strongly Agree=4. N/A is not in the average.

The standards the instructor set for students were ... (Number of Responses 65)

0% Too Low                      94% Appropriate                      6% Too High

## Summary Measures

-  Instructor score
-  College comparison mean
-  Unit summaries
  - Department, college, and university level
  - Results by sub-unit and by course level

## Sample Summary Report




### College-level Results by Department and by Course Level

Fake College Department-Level Results:

Department Score*	The instructor treated students with respect.	The instructor was well-prepared for class.	The course was intellectually challenging.	I learned a lot from this course.	Overall, this instructor was an effective teacher.	Number of Course Section Units Included in Calculations	Total Number of Evaluations Submitted	Total Number Enrolled	Overall Response Rate	
Dept A	3.53	3.60	3.73	3.23	3.41	3.70	11	112	201	55.7%
Dept B	3.10	3.51	3.45	2.59	2.74	3.22	11	117	175	66.9%
Dept C	3.33	3.55	3.46	3.14	3.20	3.30	73	995	1,301	76.5%
Dept D	3.28	3.63	3.53	2.71	3.08	3.45	40	527	839	62.8%

\* Average of Instructor Scores from course-section units across all course sections in department  
 Instructor Scores are scaled 0-4: Strongly Disagree=0; Strongly Agree=4. N/A is not in the average.

## Methodological Challenges

-  Deciding what to display and how to calculate it
  - Specific descriptions and formulas
  - Handling NA and missing responses
-  Rolling up the data across courses
  - Unit of analysis
-  Defining a course section unit
  - Large-lecture and multiple-instructor courses

## Administration and Implementation

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- Senate interest
  - “Must be implemented next semester”
- IRPA Coordinator as campus “point-person”
- IRPA-OIT planning and development team

## Administration

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- College Liaisons
  - Communication within colleges
  - On-going communication with IRPA
- Schedulers
  - IRPA Liaison with registration to department schedulers
  - SIS indicators for Yes or No Evaluation per course and instructor

## Administration (cont.)

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- Advisory Group
  - Colleges, SGA, GSG, Academic Affairs, OIT, IRPA, Graduate School
  - Policy and development recommendations
- OIT Help Desk
  - Responding to issues they cannot address
- Student Government and other groups

## Implementation

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- On-going development of application
  - Sakai development vs. reporting
  - Open source challenges

## Implementation (cont.)

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- 🌟 Student participation challenges
  - About 61-63% overall each semester
  - Confusion over “shadow systems”
  - 2/3 submit and 1/3 did not
- 🌟 Faculty buy-in
  - Varied by college and unit
  - Individual instructors make the difference

## Continuing Development

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- 🌟 Competing desires for enhancements
- 🌟 Eliminating “shadow systems”
- 🌟 Acknowledging frustrations with iterative process of development

## Data Warehousing

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- 🌟 Need for direct access to data
- 🌟 IRPA long-term assessment/research interests
- 🌟 “Local” assessment interests
- 🌟 Current vs. frozen
  - Users would query current
  - IRPA would use frozen
- 🌟 Methodological challenges – calculation error

See our CourseEvalUM website:

[https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/crs\\_eval.shtml](https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/crs_eval.shtml)

Email: [course-eval-admin@umd.edu](mailto:course-eval-admin@umd.edu)



**Fear the Turtle**